

Disclaimer: I don't own Harry Potter, everything belongs to J.K. Rowling.

Author's note: It is my first fan fiction and I am not a native English speaker. So please tolerate my poor grammar.

---

Learn from the history

Prologue

Harry woke up from yet another nightmare about Voldemort. He sat at the edge of his bed, panting heavily. He placed his hand on his scar which was burning again. Deciding it was not a good idea to go back to sleep, he quietly slipped out of his bed and grabbed his invisibility cloak. He made sure Ron was still sleeping peacefully on his bed before closing the door behind him.

Harry stood alone in the corridor of Number Twelve Grimmauld Place. He rubbed his scar in attempt to ease the pain. The memory of the recent events suddenly rushed back to him: A large group of order members "rescued" him from the Dursleys, Sirius' talk about Voldemort's plan, the hearing in the Ministry of Magic, Dumbledore's attitude towards him. He didn't want to tell anyone about his constant nightmare and the pain of his scar. He didn't want to show the others that he was so worried and so weak. Besides, he was still angry with them for hiding everything from him. And Dumbledore didn't even look straight into Harry's eyes.

It was still hours from dawn. Harry sighed and wandered around in the house aimlessly. The house was quiet, no members would arrive and no meetings would be held at that time. After not more than half an hour, Harry found himself sitting on the floor of the drawing room, thinking if he should go back to sleep or just wait until dawn. In the meantime, something caught his eyes: a faint light was coming out from the cupboard. Harry frowned; he didn't remember something like that when he was fixing the cupboard. He followed the light and finally found out the source of it. It was a stone, glowing brightly between various strange items in the cupboard. Harry grabbed the stone and

examined it closely. It seemed... familiar. Harry had seen something like that before... the Sorcerer's Stone. Before he could think any longer, he felt a force pulling him forward, just like what he felt when he traveled by a portkey. In the next moment, he disappeared and the drawing room was once again dark and quiet.

## Chapter 1: Unexpected visitor

BANG!

Harry landed heavily on the floor. He clenched his head with one hand and gripped the stone with another. His head was very painful; it seemed like the world was spinning around him. He vaguely saw a dark figure approached him.

“What...” The figure knelt down beside him immediately. “Are you all right?”

Then everything went black.

---

Harry woke up and found himself lying on a bed. His head was still aching and someone had obviously taken away his glasses, so he couldn’t tell where he was.

“Finally you are awake. Are you all right?” Someone sat beside his bed and handed him his glasses.

Wearing back his glasses, Harry sat up and observed his surrounding carefully. It was an ordinary room, at least for wizard, though it was quite messy. There were several cauldrons near a dusty corner, a large shelf fully filled with books and other items. Harry looked back at the person sitting beside him. The person was an old man, with grey hairs and beard.

Before Harry could further examine the man, his head was in pain again. He let out a gasp and clenched his head.

“Drink this, it’ll make you feel better.” The man handed a potion to Harry.

Harry, too pain to think if it was safe to drink an unknown potion offered by a stranger, took and swallowed the potion in seconds.

“Better?” the man asked.

“Yeah, thanks.” Harry looked at the man uncertainly. “Um... where am I?”

“My house,” said the man. “Do you remember what happened before you... came into my house?”

Harry tried to recall his memory, but his mind seemed blank.

“No,” he answered.

“Do you remember your name?”

“... No.”

The man looked at Harry thoughtfully. Finally he stood up and said, “I know what happened to you, child. I promise to help you, but I need you to trust me.”

Harry stared at the man for a moment and nodded.

The man smiled and handed Harry another potion. “I’ll tell you what happened after you have taken a rest. Drink this dreamless sleeping potion and sleep well. You’re exhausted... Oh, and my name is Nicolas Flamel. I’ll come and see you later.” With that he left the room.

---

In the next morning, Harry woke up and found Nicolas sitting on a couch in the living room. It was a rather large room. There were several bookshelves near the wall and beside them was a cabinet with glass door. There were several stones in the cabinet, with various shape and colour. A red stone was placed at the top section of the cabinet, separated from the others.

Nicolas turned around and gestured Harry to sit down.

“Lemon drop?” he asked as Harry sat down on another couch facing him.

“Er... no thanks,” Harry answered.

“Fine.” The old man stood up and walked to the glass cabinet. He took out a blue stone from it and handed it to Harry.

“You were holding this when I found you yesterday. Do you know what it is?”

Harry shook his head. “I don’t know. I don’t even remember my name...” He looked down at the floor

Nicolas sighed. “It’s the past-revealing stone invented by me. It was lost few years ago when some dark wizards attacked my house; taken by them I assume. It was designed to let the user travel back in time and experience the events happened in the past. It would choose its owner, just like what a wand does, and also what time the person would be transported to. But time traveling is very dangerous as one may alter the timeline and change the future, so I added a little precaution in it. Anyone who activates the stone would lose their memory temporarily until they return to their own time.”

Harry stared at Nicolas. “So the stone choose me... why?”

“Maybe there’s something you should know or experience here. You may not know until you go back to your own time, but I’m sure this experience will be useful in your future,” said Nicolas. He sighed and looked at Harry apologetically. “I’m sorry to bring you here, child. You must be scared, being transported to a strange place without any memory by a crazy invention of an old fool.”

“What am I going to do than? I don’t remember anything!” Harry covered his head with his hand. “How long am I going to stay here?”

“A year or two,” said Nicolas. “The stone may bring you directly back to your time or bring you to another time period in the past, so I can’t tell you for sure. The stone will store energy for the next time travel and it will take about a year to do so, so you may not be able to go back home any time soon... oh, and you won’t age during these years. That is, even you stay here for two years, no time will pass in your own time and you will still remain in the same age as you are now.”

He stood up and started pacing to and fro across the room. “In the meantime you will be staying here. Until September, you may go to Hogwarts.”

“Hogwarts?”

“Yes, do you remember it?” asked Nicolas.

Harry closed his eyes and began to search for his memory about Hogwarts.

He groaned and shook his head. “It’s useless.”

“It’s all right,” said Nicolas. “Hogwarts is a wizarding school. You do remember about magic, don’t you? Only a wizard can activate that stone.”

Harry sat still for a while and concentrated on his memory. Finally he nodded. “I know it somehow, I know I can do magic.”

“As you see, you still have your memory about your knowledge. But memory of what happened in your life and any information that may affect the future will be lost temporarily, until you go back to your own time.”

Harry nodded. “So, what year is it now?”

“Nineteen-forty-five.”

Harry remained silent. He wondered how many years he had been transported back in the past and what would happen in the following years.

Nicolas’ voice broke Harry’s chain of thought. “Well, we’d better give you a name first. You will need it in Hogwarts anyway. What do you think?”

“Um... anything is alright,” answered Harry.

“Better be something more common... how about Alex?” asked Nicolas.

“Alex... sounds good,” said Harry. “And last name?”

Nicolas thought for a while and smiled. “Salutor.”

“What?”

“The visitor of time,” said Nicolas. “It’ll be better if we tell the truth that you lost your memory, it’ll be easier for you. We’ll have to keep the time travel part a secret though.”

Harry nodded and yawned. “I’m sorry.”

Nicolas smiled. “You better take some rest. Time traveling is very exhausting and the loss of memories will cause headache for a few days of so.”

## Chapter 2: An Unformed Link

Alex was in a small room; it was dirty and untidy, with four small bad in it. He turned and went out of the room hastily but stopped when a tall figure appeared in front of him. The next moment, he was lifted up by collar and forced to face the man in front of him directly.

The man was tall with black hair and grey eyes. He glared at Alex and said in a low threatening voice, "What took you so long, boy? We have lots of work to be done today."

"I'm sorry sir," Alex heard himself said, "but I'm not feeling quite well..."

"Don't give me excuses," Growled the man.

Alex fell onto the floor heavily. He looked back at the man in front of him and horrified.

"Now, Riddle, you do know what your punishment will be, don't you?" The man said as he pulled out his belt.

The man raised his hand and...

---

Alex screamed. He covered his forehead with his hand and felt that it was burning.

Nicolas rushed into the room as he heard the sound.

"Are you alright? What happened?"

Alex rubbed his forehead and tried to remember his dream.

"I had a nightmare. But... but it was so real," said Alex, "My head was in pain when I woke up."

Nicolas moved closer to the bed. He gently pushed away Alex' hand and examined the boy's forehead carefully. His eyes widened as he

saw something he didn't notice the day before, a scar with lightning shape. He knew very well what that meant. A curse scar, he thought, but how did the boy get this? Only the darkest form of magic will left a scar in this shape. But there was something strange about the scar, except for its shape. He touched the scar and felt a power running though it to his hand. Nicolas' eyes moved down from the scar to the boy's eyes. A pair of emerald green eyes looked at him with nervousness and confusion. But there was more, another pair of eyes was hiding behind the emerald green one. It was very vague, and it was fading. Soon, the other pair of eyes disappeared and the emerald green eyes returned to its normal state. Suddenly, Nicolas realized what this meant.

Nicolas sat down on the chair besides the bed. He looked at Alex again. "It's a connection, Alex," he said.

"Connection?"

"Yes." Nicolas pulled out his wand from his belt and muttered a spell. A mirror appeared before Alex instantly.

Alex looked into the mirror. He hadn't really looked at his appearance after his arrival. He had messy black hair and green eyes. But something caught his eyes.

He frowned. "This scar..."

"It's a curse scar," said Nicolas. "Someone gave you this scar, or should we say, someone will give you this scar. The scar created a kind of connection between you and the caster."

Alex stared at Nicolas. "So what I saw in the dream is true? The boy..." He paused, remembering what happened in the "dream". "Did he know? Did he know I was there?"

"Probably not," said the older wizard. "His part of the link is not formed yet, as he hasn't cast the spell on you. But as you've already received the curse, so you are able to feel his emotion and even read his mind."

Alex stared at the floor and said nothing.

"I will teach you how to control the link," said Nicolas. "Although it may be considered a kind of dark art, you need to know how to control it, especially how to close the link, otherwise it would be harmful to both side of the connection."

Alex looked up and slowly he nodded.

Nicolas looked at the young wizard and sighed. It was rare to have a connection like that. Perhaps that was the reason the stone chose the boy. "Then we will start the Occlumency lesson once you recover."

## Chapter 3: Hogwarts

Alex spent the next month to adapt to his new life. He spent most of the time with Nicolas, who taught him Occlumency and told him many things about the wizarding world. Nicolas also proudly introduced his “stones” to Alex.

His Occlumency was getting better, though he still failed to close his mind sometimes and found himself in the boy’s mind again. Through his several “visit”, he now knew that the boy was called Tom Riddle. He lived in an orphanage and was also a wizard.

Two weeks before the school started, Nicolas brought Alex to see the headmaster of Hogwarts. Before that, Nicolas made some little changes in Alex’s appearance. He charmed the boy’s hair to make it flattened, which would be less remarkable and can be used to cover the scar. He also changed his eyes colour from green to blue.

With the help of the Transfiguration professor, who turned out to be a friend of Nicolas, the headmaster agreed to let Alex enter Hogwarts. Nicolas also managed to convince everyone that Alex lost his memory in an accident and that his found the boy wandering outside his house during summer. They went to Diagon Alley one day to buy Alex’s school supply and his books. From Nicolas’ observation, Alex’s skill seemed to be in the fifth year’s level (Though he was quite advanced in Defense against the Dark Art and far behind standard in divination), so he would be attending the fifth year classes.

At the end of the summer, Alex finally mastered Occlumency. And on the 1st September, he went to Hogwarts with the other students.

Alex looked around the platform, looking for that boy. He knew that boy, Tom Riddle, was going to Hogwarts too. Though he knew it was this boy who would give him the scar, he wanted to meet the boy that often appeared in his dream in person. The train whistled, but the boy was still nowhere to be seen. Alex sighed and hurried off to the train.

Alex and the other new students followed a professor and entered the great hall. Alex recognized the professor as Professor Dumbledore, the transfiguration professor who helped him before.

The great hall was full of students. All of them were talking excitingly and observing the new students. Alex noticed that a hat was placed on a stool near the staff table, and as soon as they lined up in front of it, it started singing loudly.

After the song of the sorting hat, Professor Dumbledore stepped forward. "When I call your name, you will put on the hat and sit on the stool to be sorted."

And the sorting began. One by one the first year was sorted in their respective house. At last, until the last first year was sorted into Hufflepuff, Alex found himself standing alone in the middle of the great hall, he felt that everyone in the hall was watching him curiously.

Dippet the headmaster stood up. "We have a new fifth year student this year. Due to a magical accident, Mr. Salutor lost his memory and need time to recover. Before that, he will be staying here and continue his education."

"Salutor, Alex."

Alex stepped forward and sat on the stool. Once he put the sorting hat on, he heard a small voice talking to him.

"Hmm," said the voice. "Difficult. Very difficult. Plenty of courage, I see. Not bad mind, either. And a nice thirst to prove yourself. Now that's interesting... so where shall I put you?"

A/N: Well, what do you think? Please Review

## Chapter 5: Quidditch

“Hey, Tom,” Alex greeted his friend who was sitting in his usual corner of the library. Tom looked up from the book was reading and raised his eyebrow when he saw Alex stood beside him.

“I thought you are in the Quidditch tryout?”

Alex shook his head. “They want someone who can stay in the team for a longer time. Besides, they can hardly cooperate with me.”

“You fly well,” said Tom. “You can be a good seeker.”

Alex shrugged and dropped himself in the seat next to Tom. He frowned. “Studying again?”

Tom smiled. “It’s something you ought to do more.”

Alex groaned and decided to change the subject. “What do you have later?”

“Transfiguration,” Tom answered with dislike.

Alex raised his eyebrow. “Your transfiguration is the top in your year.” ‘So as Defense Against the Dark Arts, Charm, Potions and near every other subjects.’ Alex added to himself.

“Dumbledore never like me as much as the other teachers did. And I hate the look he gave me, it looks as if it can see through me and read my mind,” answered Tom before he buried himself in the book again.

Alex rolled his eyes. “Bookworm,” he muttered.

After that meeting in the opening feast, Tom and Alex had become quite close. Though the friendship was still tentative, Tom had become more comfortable with the presence of his new companion.

Despite the fact that Tom spent most of him time in the library, Alex was quite fond of the boy. He was smart, with a trait most Slytherins

possessed- cunning. But he was also a good friend. Once he got familiar with you, he would be warmer and not so cold. The boy was still quite close to himself though, he had been alone for a long time, and it was hard for him to trust another person so easily.

Tom never spoke of his life in the orphanage, most of the time they would just speak about schoolwork and their classes. Sometimes Tom would also fill in some common knowledge about the wizarding world for Alex to, as Tom put it, survive in Slytherin.

In Alex opinion, Tom was too mature for his age. But as Alex recalled what he saw in his “dreams”, he found that the maturity was not a surprise at all. Sadly, Tom must learn to be independent in his early age, he must do everything on his own and no childish behavior was allowed. This was his way to survive in the orphanage.

Tom was right, Alex did fly well.

When the captain of the Slytherin house team announced the date of the Quidditch tryout, Alex immediately found his interest in Quidditch and demanded Tom to explain more about it. As Tom never had much interest in that sport, he soon lost his patience at the complicated rule of Quidditch and Alex’s numerous questions.

After gaining the permission of the flying professor, Tom simply just drugged Alex onto a broom and that effectively shut the mouth of his friend.

Surprisingly, Alex flew remarkably well. Once he kicked off from the ground and looked down from the broom, he felt joy and familiarity. He knew how to control a broom. Alex flew around the Quidditch pitch; he felt the wind sweeping beside him as he drove up and down with top speed. Alex grinned as he flew; he was glad that he finally found something he was familiar with.

In 1st of October, the whole school was all sitting in the stands around the Quidditch pitch, waiting for the first match of the year- Slytherin versus Ravenclaw.

The flying teacher whistled. Players of both team kicked off the ground and the game began.

The game was quite exciting; both team players flew from one end to another in top speed.

While Alex was cheering for his house along with the other Slytherins, he looked around and frowned. 'It's like that again.'

Suddenly, the Slytherin seeker dived and reached out for the tiny shinning object a few feet before him. The Ravenclaw seeker saw that but it was too late; the Slytherin seeker pulled up his broom and the golden snitch was safely clenched in his hand.

"Tom, why do the other houses hate Slytherin so much?"

Tom raised his eyebrow. "Why do you suddenly ask that?"

They were sitting in their usual corner of the Slytherin common room. The room was noisier than usual, mostly due to their victory that morning.

"Well, remember the time when I was sorted? When the sorting hat called out 'Slytherin', the other three houses looked at me as if I've cursed them with Cruciatus before. I was not sure if it's because of me or the house. Until today's match, something similar happened again. The Hufflepuff and Gryffindor were cheering for Ravenclaw, they were not happy to see us win at all."

"Don't bother about them. They dislike us for many different reasons, the tales about how bad and how evil Slytherins are told by their parents for one. And Slytherins' dislike of half blood and mudblood for another."

Alex groaned. He buried his head in his hand, "We're onto that again?"

Tom chuckled at his friend's reaction. Alex was not at all approved by the idea that pureblood was superior and the others shouldn't have the right to learn magic.

"We hate them, it's just normal for them to act this way."

Alex looked at him thoughtfully. "Why do you hate them then, Tom?" he asked quietly. "You're not a... pureblood." He hesitated before saying the word, knowing Tom did not like the mention of it.

Tom stared at the ground. "I don't hate them, I guess. It's just their muggle-loving attitude that I hate," he said slowly. "But I definitely hate muggles." Tom raised his head and met Alex's gaze.

Alex nearly gaped at what he saw.

Hatred.

Tom's eyes were filled with hatred, extreme hatred. But there was more, deep inside the eyes Alex also saw sadness, and sorrow.

Alex only had one thought in mind. 'He is dangerous.' Alex had no idea what the muggles had done to his friend except from what he saw in his visions. But one thing was clear, Tom needed help.

No one else in the room saw this, and Alex probably was the one who understood Tom's situation most. Alex knew it was up to him to help the boy before it was too late, before Tom went into a road which had no return.

A/N: Alright, here's the new chapter. I don't know if you like it or not, or shall I continue. Anyway, please R&R.

## Chapter 6: Meetings

Alex knew he needed to speak to Tom.

From what he gathered in his visions, Tom was being left out, and even abused several times in the orphanage. The man who beat Tom also seemed to regard “wizards” as “freak” and forbidden Tom to say or do anything related to magic. But these were some scattered pieces he gathered in only a month after all. He needed to get a more complete picture of Tom’s life if he was to help Tom, or at least lessened the boy’s dangerous hatred towards muggles.

Well, he knew he needed to speak to Tom, but he never had the chance. Due to the fact that Nicolas thought Alex was up to fifth year level, Alex had to take the OWLs this year, which meant Alex had numerous homework to do. He barely had time to rest, and although he and Tom always stayed together, Alex couldn’t find a chance to have such a conversation with Tom. Besides, though Alex knew it was necessary, deep down in his heart, he dreaded to have this conversation with Tom. It was obvious that Tom didn’t want to speak about his life outside Hogwarts. Alex didn’t want to break the newly-formed trust between them.

A week before the Christmas holiday began would be the second Hogsmeade visit in the year. Alex didn’t go there last time because of his heavy work load. Besides, he didn’t feel like going there alone as Tom, a second year student, was not allowed to go.

This time, however, Alex was looking forward to the visit. Nicolas sent him a letter asking for his well being and said that he wanted to meet him on the next Hogsmeade weekend.

“So you are going this time?” Tom, who was sitting next to Alex in the common room, asked after finished reading Nicolas’ letter.

Alex nodded. “I’d like to meet Nicolas again. Besides...”

“What?” Tom asked.

Alex shrugged. "Well, nothing. Anyway, I'd better finish my potion essay if I'm going to Hogsmeade this Saturday."

Tom eyed Alex suspiciously at the sudden change of topic, but he said nothing about it.

Alex went to Hogsmeade along with other students. He wandered along the crowded streets. It was a strange feeling. He did not remember being in Hogsmeade before, yet he knew this place. He knew where he was heading to, he knew which shop was selling which thing, and he also knew which shop should be existed yet it was not there.

There was still time before Alex's meeting with Nicolas, so he wandered around, looking for the thing he wished to buy.

Soon, Alex wandered into a pet shop, which he knew was not supposed to be there. 'It'll probably be closed down in the future then.' Alex thought. It might be true. After all, Alex seemed to be the only customer in the shop.

Alex looked around. The shop was dark and dusty. The cages and shelves looked as if they hadn't been cleaned for centuries. 'No wonder there isn't any customers here.' Alex thought. Just as he prepared to leave, he heard a voice coming from a dark corner of the shop.

/...and he didn't even try to serve the customer. /

Alex walked toward the corner and finally found the source of the sound. It was a snake. The snake was huge, about eight feet long, but Alex thought it still hadn't grown into its full length.

/Er...are you the one who talked just now? / Alex asked tentatively.

/You can understand? / The snake hissed.

/Of course. You can speak English! / Alex answered in amazement.

/English? No, I was not speaking English, whatever that means. But neither are you, human. You are the first one of your kind I met that can speak our language. /

/What? Your language? / Alex said, confused. Surely he was speaking English, wasn't he?

/Yes. / The snake rose higher in its cage. / Would you bring me out of here, human? I long the leave this place for a long time. /

/Bring you out of here? / Alex touched the snake's cage. It was covered with a thick layer of dust. Alex sighed. 'This place was not suitable for any creatures to live in.' he thought. Yet there was another problem...

/But where can I keep you, you are so huge. And snakes are not allowed in Hogwarts. /

/But you are a wizard. Surely you can do something about it. /

'Well, I may be able to shrink it a little. And there ought to be some place where I can hide it.' Alex thought.

/Please bring me out of here, human. /

Alex eyed the snake, and nodded. /My name is Alex by the way, so stop calling me "human". Um... do you have a name? /

/No, Master Alex. /

/It's just Alex. As for your name... / Alex looked at the snake thoughtfully. /How about Nagini? /

/Nagini? I like the name. /

Alex smiled. /Fine then, I'll go and talk to the owner of the shop... and I will do something about your size. /

The owner of the pet shop was surprised that Alex wanted to buy the snake, and even more so when Alex said he could talk to the snake.

But other than that, the owner was more than happy to sell Nagini to him. Alex then spent some time to shrink Nigini into a size that it could hide inside Alex's sleeve without being discovered.

Alex continued to walk around Hogsmeade, entering a few shops on his way. Eventually, Alex went into an ornament shop and something caught his eyes immediately.

He smiled. 'That's it, it suits him perfectly.'

In the afternoon, Alex went to the Three Broomstick, where he would be meeting Nicolas. He went into the shop and saw Nicolas was already waiting for him there.

"Eh, here you are. How've you been, Alex?" asked the older wizard.

"I'm fine," said Alex. "Though it is strange, you know. I have memories of certain knowledge, and yet I can't remember learning them. I'm fine, really," Alex added when he saw the worry look on the old man's face.

After Alex's arrival, Nicolas seemed to regard him as his responsibility, as Alex ended up here because of his "crazy invention".

"Did you make any friends in school?" Nicolas asked after a while.

Alex smiled. Nicolas did act as if he was Alex's parent, and Alex didn't mind at all. He did not know why, but he was grateful that someone cared for him as a parent did.

Alex nodded and went on telling Nicolas what happened since the start of school, except the part of Tom's hatred towards muggles.

"Tom Riddle, the one who have connection with you?" Nicolas asked.

Alex nodded again. "We become quite close. I know he will give me the scar, but ...he's a good friend."

"It doesn't matter what is going to happen in the future," said Nicolas. "Do whatever you want and forget about the future for now. You'll be amazed what you find, Alex. And that's what the stone for." He smiled. "I'm glad you find a good friend here."

Alex smiled. Suddenly he felt a movement under his sleeve and remembered what happened that morning.

"Um... Nicolas?" said Alex slowly. "Can anyone talk to snakes?"

Nicolas startled at Alex's question. "What happened?"

Nicolas was deep in thought after Alex told him what happened in the pet shop. Finally he said slowly, "The only one in history who was known to have this ability is Salazar Slytherin, one of the founders of Hogwarts." He raised his head and looked into Alex's eyes. "It's rare gift, Alex. And I fear this information will indeed change the future if anyone knows of it. Keep it a secret for now, don't tell anyone else about your special ability."

Alex didn't understand, but he knew its seriousness when he looked into the eyes of the older man. He also knew the consequences of changing the future. Slowly, he nodded. "I won't tell."

"Not even your close friend."

Alex hesitated before he nodded again.

"I'm sorry, Alex," Nicolas whispered. "But we can't take the risk of changing the future."

A/N: Thanks for the reviewers! What do you think about this chapter? Please review!

A/N: By the way, I don't own the "You'll be amazed what you find." Does anyone know what it comes from?

## Chapter 7: Talking and Bonding

Alex woke up early on the Christmas Day. He was the only one in the dormitory. All Slytherins except Alex and Tom went home to spend their holidays with their parents. Alex quickly got up and went down to greet his friend.

Alex went straight to the second year's dormitory and found Tom half-awoken in his bed.

“What are you doing here?” Tom mumbled from his position under the blanket.

“I beg your pardon?” said Alex cheerfully, dropping himself in the bed next to Tom's.

“What are you doing in the second year's dormitory at...” Tom glanced at the clock besides him and groaned, “five o'clock in the morning?”

“Finding you, of course.” answered Alex, watching Tom with amusement.

Tom groaned and buried himself deeper into the pillow.

“Oh, wake up, Tom. It's Christmas today.”

No respond. Alex grinned mischievously and took out his wand.

“Accio pillow!”

A cried from Tom immediately followed by a loud “bump” was the effect of the incantation. Tom, who had been burying himself firmly in the pillow, was expelled out of his bed by the force.

Tom crawled up from the floor and immediately sent his counter attack to the laughing Alex.

“Expelliarmus!”

Alex went through a similar routine as Tom and ended up hitting the floor heavily.

Rubbing his aching head, Alex pulled himself on his feet. "Hey! You don't need to do that."

"You are the one who started it!" Tom countered, standing up as well. "What are you doing here anyway, and at this hour?"

Alex smiled. He pulled out something from his robe and handed it to Tom. "Merry Christmas, Tom."

Tom eyed the present in Alex's hand. "This is for me?"

"Of course!" answered Alex, not understanding Tom's reaction.

Tom hesitated before he whispered, "I hadn't received any Christmas presents before."

Alex didn't know what to say. 'So he didn't have any close friends before then...or is it because of the orphanage? Anyway...' Alex faced Tom and said, "It's the first one then." He smiled and handed the present closer to Tom. "And you better prepare to receive more."

Tom met Alex's gaze for a while. Alex saw the doubt in his friend's eyes slowly faded. Tom smiled and took the present.

"What's it?" he asked.

"Open it."

Tom opened his present to reveal a wand holster. It was made of leather, with a silver badge pinned on it. The badge was in a shape of a wand, which was coiled by a silvery snake.

"What do you think? Do you like it?" said Alex.

Tom nodded. He eyed the silvery snake for a while and chuckled. "It suits me well."

“Yeah, a serpent,” teased Alex.

“Oh, shut up,” said Tom. Then he lowered his gaze and whispered, “Thank you, Alex.”

Alex grinned. “Friends, right?”

Tom looked up to meet Alex eyes and nodded. “Yeah, friends.”

After breakfast, Tom dragged Alex to the seventh floor corridor, saying that it was his turn to give Alex Christmas present.

He stopped suddenly in the middle of the corridor and looked at Alex thoughtfully. “Where do you want to be?” he asked.

“What?” asked Alex, puzzled.

“Um... let’s see...you like Quidditch?”

Alex nodded.

“And I remembered you once said you like to drink the butterbeer in Hogsmeade?”

Alex nodded again.

Tom thought for a while. “Well, let’s see if you like this one.”

Alex gave his friend a questioning look as Tom started pacing to and fro the corridor. Tom didn’t reply and continued pacing for about five times. Suddenly a door appeared in the wall of the corridor. Tom smiled and gestured Alex to open the door.

Alex frowned at Tom but followed the boy’s instruction nonetheless. He grabbed the handle and opened the door slowly.

Alex’s eyes widened as he saw the scene in front of him. He was currently standing in front of a forest. There were trees everywhere and nothing of it seemed like a room.

“What... ”Alex turned to Tom for explanation. But the boy just stepped in the forest and gestured Alex to follow.

Alex followed Tom through an invisible path through the forest. After a while, Tom stopped and moved aside to allow Alex to look at the scene before him. Alex opened his mouth in awe as he found himself staring at a large clearing of the forest. There was a small wooden table in the middle with several bottles of butterbeer placed on it. On the ground next to the table were two broomsticks and a box of Quidditch balls.

“Where are we?” Alex asked in awe.

Tom chuckled at his friend’s reaction. “Do you like this place?”

Alex nodded. “How do you know of this place? We’re... still in the castle, right?” he asked, looking up to the blue sky.

“Yes, we’re still in the castle,” Tom answered. “And for this place, I knew it, because I was the one who created it.”

“What?”

“We are in the Room of Requirement, Alex. I found it in my first year,” said Tom as he walked towards the table. “That time I wanted a quiet place where I can be left alone. Well, you know, without the other Slytherins...I still hadn’t get used to their...attitude towards me at that time. I went into this room and found myself in this forest, where I can do whatever I want without anyone disturbing me. Soon I found out that this room will change according to the requirement of those who enter, or according to where that person wants to be.”

“The Room of Requirement, eh?” Alex said in amazement.

“No one knows of this room. Not even the headmaster,” said Tom. “Keep it a secret, will you?”

Alex looked at Tom and nodded. “I promise. Thank you for sharing this secret with me, Tom.”

Tom grinned mischievously. "Oh, and it is a good place to do homework and read books as well."

Alex rolled his eyes but then fell into laughter together with Tom.

The two friends spent the whole afternoon together in that room. At last, the two of them lay down under a tree, exhausted.

"I haven't...felt this way for a long time." whispered Tom with his eyes closed.

"So carefree, so happy." Alex finished for Tom.

Tom nodded and opened his eyes. He stared at the sky for a moment before he asked, "What do you want to ask me, Alex?"

"What?" Alex turned to face Tom, but the boy was still staring at the sky.

"There's something you want to ask me. You've been like that for quite some time... you wanted to talk to me but then you hesitated and closed you mouth," Tom said without looking at Alex. "Is it... about muggles?"

Alex was startled by Tom's keen observation. The boy had placed piece and piece together and got this conclusion, which was very close to the truth.

Alex sighed. "Why do you hate muggles? You seemed to be so... angry with them." he asked tentatively.

Tom fell silent. Just as Alex thought he wouldn't answer, Tom replied in a low voice, "My muggle father... he abandoned me, even before I born. He left my mother just because he found out she was a witch. My mother died soon after I born, when I was one I guess. I don't have much memory about her. I was left alone in... an orphanage since then. Those muggles were not so happy about my existence though, especially after those strange accidents happened after my arrival. You know, magical children always tend to use magic

unconsciously. I had no friends there. They ignored me, and sometimes even..." He closed his eyes as those memories flowed back.

"Beat you?" Alex whispered. Yet he already knew it was true.

Tom nodded slowly. "They always did that to me whenever they were angry. And I didn't even know why. I hadn't done anything wrong. They simply wanted to let off their anger on me. Just because they didn't want to accept something that would prove what they always believed was wrong. Those muggles... I hate them. I will never forgive them."

'That's why. No wonder he hates them so much, I'd have felt the same way...' thought Alex, 'But...'

I will never forgive them.

He remembered Tom's last sentence. He wanted to tell Tom not all muggles are that bad, but what did he know? Tom's experience with muggles were far more than him. He didn't remember anything, and he hardly ever met any muggles since his arrival. But if Tom let his anger take over him, it would be dangerous.

Alex didn't know what to say. "Don't do anything stupid, Tom," he whispered. This was the only thing he could think of.

"I won't," Tom promised.

Alex nodded. "You are not alone, Tom," he said softly.

"I know," Tom whispered. He turned and their eyes met.

At that moment, a strong bond was formed between the two of them. One who lost his memory and lost in an age where nothing was familiar. One who had a sorrowful past and a lonely life. It was not the bond that existed through the curse, but a strong bond of friendship. Both of them were grateful to have each other as company. Yet both of them were still unaware of their future, unaware of their interrelated destiny.

A/N: This chapter is a bit strange, but the conversation between them is important in the whole story, as well as the friendship between them. Things probably will start going downhill from the next chapter. But exam is coming again, and it is a rather important public exam, so the next update will probably be two months later. (I would have left a cliffhanger otherwise...)

Anyway, I hope you like this chapter. And whether you like it or not,

PLEASE review, review and REVIEW!!!

## Chapter 8: The beginning

"Look like you've got another present," said Tom as he entered the dormitory.

There was indeed a present lay near Alex's bed which Alex overlooked that morning when he rushed down to Tom's room. Alex picked up the present and opened the letter that attached to it.

"It's from Nicolas," said Alex.

Dear Alex,

Merry Christmas! I hope you like the present. It's another of my inventions, a stone that can be used to test your magic. Hit it with whatever spell you want, if the spell works correctly, the stone will glow red. The stronger the power, the brighter it will glow. If the spell goes wrong, it will remain green in colour.

Alex opened the present. There was a small wooden box with a fist-sized green stone in it.

Alex chuckled. "Trust Nicolas to give me something like this."

But other than the wooden box, something else was wrapped in the present. Alex picked up the thing and immediately knew what it was, although he didn't remember seeing one before.

"Invisibility cloak," Tom muttered beside him, staring the cloak in awe. "He gave it to you as a Christmas present?" he asked disbelievingly.

Alex shrugged. He looked back to the letter.

By the way, I think it's time to return this to you, the invisibility cloak. I don't know how you got hold on such thing, but you were grabbing it when I found you. Use it well.

Nicolas

"An invisibility cloak. I wonder how you get it..." said Tom.

"If only I can remember," muttered Alex.

He picked up the cloak and examined it. "Use it well, eh? Imagine how many trouble we can get into with this. We can wander around the castle after curfew, break numerous school rules without any detentions, and..."

"We can access the restricted area in the library freely." Tom finished his sentence.

Alex raised his eyebrows. "Restricted area? Without permission from the teachers? What do you want to find there, 'model student'?" he said in a mocking tone.

Tom was a model student in the eyes of the professors. But after several months of staying with Tom, Alex knew that the boy did break quite a few school rules from time to time. As Tom said, it's mostly due to his "curiosity" about the school. And the boy actually managed to find out several secrets of the old castle which Alex was certain that even Dippet himself did not know. Apart from the Room of Requirement, which Alex only found out earlier that day, Tom had also shown him some of his "discoveries" - several short cuts in the school, a secret pathway that lead to Hogsmeade and a few classrooms that would only appear at a particular time or condition. Thanked to Tom's "Slytherin nature" and the fact that the boy decided to use the Slytherins' disregard of him to his own advantage, he was never caught during his little "exploration". Alex knew that Tom was searching for something, but he never figured out what.

Tom eyed his friend thoughtfully. Finally he sighed. "Have you ever read..." he started.

Alex groaned. "For the hundredth times, I've never read Hogwarts: A History."

Tom rolled his eyes and left to take something from his dormitory. He returned with a parchment in his hand.

"I copy this from the book," he said.

Alex read through the parchment and raised his eyebrows. "So you believe it's real?"

Tom shrugged. "I don't know. But I got a strange feeling that told me it does exist. And I was meant to find it out... It's just like someone is calling me there."

Alex closed his eyes and focused on his own memories. He also had a feeling that what the parchment said was true, no, he knew it was true. But as usual, it was useless in trying to remember how he knew it. He scowled inwardly. Not for the first time since his arrival, Alex blamed Nicolas for adding the stupid memory-erasing function to the stone.

"So you think we can find more about it in the restricted area?" he said finally.

Tom grinned, not missing the use of "we" in Alex's sentence. "So you're helping me?"

"Yeah, it sounds interesting. Besides, someone needs to keep you out of trouble," said Alex.

Tom rolled his eyes at the last comment. "We still have a few days left before everyone comes back."

So on the next day. The two Slytherins went to the library when everyone was supposed to be sleeping.

The library was dark and quiet. They could hear their own footsteps as they walked around. With only the light from their wand tips, they finally managed to reach their destination.

After nearly half an hour of searching, Alex had come across a screaming book, a biting book, several books with blank pages, lots of books about dark arts and many others with titles he had never heard of. But he still hadn't found what he wanted.

Letting out a sighing of frustration, Alex sat down on the floor beside a book shelf. He whispered, "Are you sure there's..." But he was soon interrupted by Tom.

"Take a look at this," said Tom from his position at the end of a book shelf.

Alex frowned. "I've searched that place just now. There's nothing but books of dark creatures."

"This one." Tom pointed at the empty space between two books as Alex went beside him.

"But there's nothing here," said Alex, staring at the empty space in front of him.

"Nothing?" said Tom, puzzled. He reached out and pulled out something invisible to Alex's eyes. "This one. The History of Hogwarts."

Alex blinked. Just as Tom read out the title of the book, a book with green cover suddenly appeared in Tom's hands.

"What..." he gasped.

'Someone must have charmed the book.' he thought. 'So it would be invisible to everyone but those who knew what it is. But why Tom could..."

"Alex?" asked Tom, concerned. "Are you alright?"

Alex shook his head to clear his thought. "I'm fine," he said. "Um...Tom, have you read this book before?"

"No." Tom shook his head. "I've never searched this area so thoroughly before. Why?"

Alex shrugged. "Nothing."

He looked at the book in Tom's hands. "The History of Hogwarts? In the restricted area?" he wondered.

"The author." said Tom, pointing to the name painted in silver on the cover.

"Salazar Slytherin." Alex read the name quietly.

Tom nodded. He opened the book and turned to the content page. Moving the flickering light of his wand closer, he quickly glanced through the page.

"I doubt anyone except the four founders knew these..." Tom muttered. He continued to look down the page and stopped at the bottom of it. He grinned. "Here it is."

Alex glanced at the page. Quietly, he read the out last line, "The Chamber of Secrets."

A/N: I'm back! I finally finished my exams. And I have three months of free time. No school, no exams! So I'd be able to update more frequently. I really want to finish this part of the story as soon as possible, as I can't wait to start writing the next part, which is actually the major part of this story.

By the way, thanks for the reviews. And please tell me what you think about this chapter!

## Chapter 9: Voldemort

### The Chamber of Secrets

Little did the other founders know, Salazar Slytherin secretly built a chamber in the school. He locked a monster there just before he left Hogwarts.

When the time came, his heir would open the chamber again and release the monster to purify the blood of the world.

Two entrances were made: One lay within the wall, where the mark of Slytherin was hidden. One lay beyond the wall, guarded by the Greek Guardian.

"Great. He did know how to leave a clue," looking up from the book, Alex said sarcastically.

After the night adventure, the two Slytherins successfully sneaked back to the dungeons without being caught. On the next day, the two boys gathered in the common room, reading the book excitedly.

Tom smirked at Alex's comment. "Well, at least we know the chamber really existed, and ..." He looked up at his friend. "do you think there's really a monster in it?"

"It seems so..." Alex looked down at the book again. "When the time comes, his heir will open the chamber again and release the monster to purify the blood of the world..." He rolled his eyes. "Here comes 'the matter of blood' again."

Tom shrugged. "It's what Salazar Slytherin always emphasized."

"Then I wonder why in the world did I end up in Slytherin..." muttered Alex.

Tom grinned mischievously. "Because you're sly, cunning..." said Tom mockingly.

"Who are you talking about, Tom?" said Alex, raising his eyebrows. "Anyway, what shall we do? The clue Slytherin left was nothing more than your last name."

Tom rolled his eyes. He turned back to the book. "Two entrances were made: One lay within the wall, where the mark of Slytherin was hidden. One entrance is in the castle then. The mark of Slytherin..."

"A serpent," Alex interrupted. "But it will take years to search a hidden mark in this castle. We don't even know the size and the form of it."

Tom sighed. "You're right." He looked up at Alex and smiled. "But we still have time."

Alex shifted uneasily. He didn't have time. He knew he had to leave at the end of the year, but he still hadn't told Tom. He should be at Hogwarts until he regained his memories, or at least until he finished his seventh year, which was nearly two years later. Since he hadn't shown any sign of regaining his memories, no one had questioned him about his staying or leaving either. Worst of all, it was not simply leaving Hogwarts. He would be leaving this world behind. Which meant, there would be no way for Tom to contact him after he left.

Strangely, with only four months, the bond between the two of them became remarkably strong. They were closed and nearly inseparable. For Alex, the younger boy was like his... brother. After Tom had revealed to him so truthfully about his past, he felt that the boy was his responsibility. He wanted to protect him, to prevent him from being hurt again. He didn't want to leave Tom alone again, yet he had no choice.

"Alex?" said Tom, waving his hand in front of Alex. "Alex..."

Alex shook off his chain of thought. "Eh? What?"

Tom rolled his eyes. "Welcome back to the world of living."

"There's still one more clue, right?" said Alex, completely ignored his friend's last sentence. Looking down at the book, he read, "One lay beyond the wall, guarded by the Greek Guardian. Beyond the wall..."

that's outside the castle. The Greek Guardian? I guess it's a magical creature."

Tom nodded. "And probably even a dark creature." He eyed his friend. "It seems to be quite dangerous. Not only this guardian creature, but there's also an unknown monster in the chamber."

"But you still want to go on," Alex voiced his friend's thought.

Tom looked down. "Something is calling me there...summoning me there," he said quietly. "The more I found out about this chamber, the stronger the feeling became." he looked up, determination shown in his eyes. "I must find out why... alone."

"Hey!" Alex protested. "Look, I can't stop you from acting like a Gryffindor, but you are not going alone."

"It's dangerous," said Tom.

"Well, Mr. Riddle, you are a second year and I'm a fifth year. If it's dangerous for me, it'd be even more so for you," Alex countered. "You need some help. Besides..." He pointed at the book. "I helped in searching the book, so I'm already involved in it."

"Are you sure?" asked Tom, sounding both worry and hopeful. "You don't need to..."

"Do you trust me?" Alex asked abruptly.

Tom was startled by the sudden question and startled himself further by his own answer.

"Of course," he answered softly.

"Let me help you then," said Alex.

Tom hesitated and nodded.

Alex grinned. "Well, let's try the second clue then. Though it's as vague as the first one, I think we can at least find out what creature it is."

Tom smirked and raised his eyebrows at his friend. "Which means..."

Alex groaned. "Library again."

Christmas was over and a new year began. For the fifth and seventh year students, it meant their OWLs or NETs were drawing nearer.

Alex didn't spend much time on researching about the Chamber of Secrets, since he already had enough homework to consume all of his spare time. On the contrary, Tom did spend quite some time in the library, studying and searching.

Alex stretched his arms. He finally finished his transfiguration essay. He turned around to study the small figure resting under a tree.

'It's unfair. The second years have way too little homework,' he thought bitterly.

Alex and Tom were in "Tom's Forest" again, where Alex had spent most of his time studying and doing homework. Tom had finished his homework a long time ago and was now sitting under a tree, playing with... what?

Alex stood before his friend, who was now surrounded by flying letters. He studied the letters and raised an eyebrow at Tom.

"Are you really that bored that you need you play with your own name for entertainment," teased Alex.

Tom grinned sheepishly.

"I am thinking of a new name for myself," he said. Seeing Alex's questioning glance, he added softly, "I was named after my father. I...I don't want to use that muggle's name."

Alex nodded in understanding. He sat next to Tom silently. Eyeing the letters, he asked, "So, what have you got?"

Tom smiled and waved his wand, controlling the letters. He moved R, O, T and M in the air and lined them up in order.

MORT

Alex thought for a while.

"How about this?" he said. Waving his own wand, he added four more letters before Tom's.

VOLD MORT

"We can link them up with an E," Tom suggested, moving the letter E to the middle.

VOLDEMORT

"Voldemort," Alex read out the name. "What do you think?"

"Voldemort," Tom repeated and grinned. "I like it."

"How about those letters?" asked Alex, pointing his wand to the unused letter that was still flying in circle on top of him.

"I'm thinking of adding this..." Tom pulled down three more letters.

I AM VOLDEMORT

"We still have four left," said Tom, eyeing the four letters.

Alex looked at the four letters: R, L, D and O.

He grinned. "That's easy." He waved his wand in the air. "Since you're so ambitious..."

I AM LORD VOLDEMORT

"Lord!" Tom laughed out. "I'm not that ambitious. I don't want to become a lord or something."

"But are you telling me you want to insert four more letters in the name? That'd be awfully long," said Alex. "Besides, I like the name Voldemort."

Tom sighed. "So do I."

"Lord Voldemort, then." Alex grinned. "What say you, my Lord?" he added playfully.

Tom flinched. He shot Alex a glare. "Don't you ever call me that. It makes me uncomfortable."

Alex shrugged. "I'll use 'Tom' anyway, 'Voldemort' is still too long." He paused and suddenly grinned mischievously. "Or do you prefer 'Voldie'?"

Tom buried his head in his hands. "You'd better forget the whole stupid naming thing, Alex," he muttered.

The OWLs had finally begun. As Alex chose to befriend Tom Riddle of all students, he had started to prepare for the exams more than six months ago. He actually was even quite confident in getting at least an "E" in most of the main subjects.

The last exam he had was Astronomy; it was nearly ten in the evening when he finished the exam. Before he entered the Slytherin common room, he heard a hissing voice.

/Alex.../

/What's it, Nagini,/ hissed Alex, looking around to check his surrounding. He lowered himself to allow the snake to move up but frozen when he heard his snake's next sentence.

/Master's friend is in danger./

## Chapter 10: The Forbidden Forest

Alex was now running around in the Forbidden Forest. He swore under his breath. How could he forget he possessed an invisibility cloak and actually left it in his dorm when he needed it most? More importantly, what on earth was Tom thinking, disappeared into the Forbidden Forest alone without any protection?

/ Master's friend went into the forest right after dinner and still hasn't returned./

Nagini told him that just now. Right after dinner. That was right after Alex left for his exam. Obviously, whatever Tom was doing now, he didn't want Alex to be involved in it.

But it had been three hours since Tom disappeared and what Nagini said scared Alex even further.

/ Something horrible in the forest awakes, Alex. I smell...danger./

He didn't know how the sneak actually smelled such thing, but he had a bad feeling himself.

Something was not right.

Alex rushed to Tom's dorm after hearing Nagini's warning and searched desperately for any clue that told him his friend's whereabouts. But then what he found didn't make him feel any better. He found a copy of Dangerous Beasts & All You Need To Know About Them in the boy's drawer. A paragraph in the marked page of the book read:

### CHIMAERA

The Chimaera is a rare Greek monster with a lion's head, a goat's body and a dragon's tail. Vicious and bloodthirsty, the Chimaera is extremely dangerous.

There is a legend of Chimaera: A powerful wizard from the ancient time brought a Chimaera egg to Scotland. With a combination of

various dark magic, the wizard controlled and trained that Chimaera as his own guardian. It is said that the Chimaera was commanded to kill everyone that crossed its path and only spared those its master approved.

Despite what the legend said, the Chimaera is impossible to be tamed. So far, there is only one known instance of the successful slaying of a Chimaera.

The Chimaera is rare and hard to be found. Rumours that a Chimaera dwelled in the northern part of a forest in Scotland are unconfirmed.

Alex paled as he read through the page. A forest in Scotland... The Forbidden Forest.

“That idiot...” he muttered.

Alex was nervous and extremely worried. What should he do? Tell the professors? No, Tom would surely be expelled and sent back to the orphanage. The other Slytherins? They wouldn’t tell the teachers, but they wouldn’t help him either. After all, which Slytherin would put himself in a danger that can be avoided?

But it was a danger Alex could not avoid. Time was running out and it was a risk he had to take.

So Alex was now in the Forbidden Forest, desperately searching for his friend.

“Point me.” His wand spun on his palm and pointed ahead of him, confirming he was taking the correct direction, north.

Alex could hear his own footsteps clearly as he ran on the forest ground. He shivered. The horrible bad feeling hit him once again. The forest was quiet that night, way too quiet.

/ Be careful, Alex,/ The hissing voice of Nagini came out beneath his sleeve.

Just after the warning, Alex heard it. Something was moving behind the trees, advancing on him. The quiet atmosphere made any noise caused by sudden movement easily heard.

/Wolves,/ said Nagini. /Two of them./

Alex swallowed, grabbing his wand tighter.

/Let me deal with them, Alex,/ Nagini said rather excitedly. /I haven't tasted flesh for a long time./

/But.../ Alex started.

/Just return me to my original size and I will be fine,/ The snake continued. / Your friend is near, I smell his blood. You need to hurry./

Alex nodded reluctantly. He lowered his arm to the ground. Once the snake was back to the floor, he pointed his wand to it.

“Engorgio.” The snake enlarged and soon return to its original size.

/Be careful, Nagini,/ he whispered and started running deeper into the forest.

/ Good luck, master./

Alex kept running. He tried to ignore whatever sound from his surrounding and focused on Tom. Finally he stopped in front of a clearing. With only the dim light from his wand, he managed to see a huge figure ahead of him.

Alex involuntarily took a step back. But as he looked up again, the figure had disappeared.

He walked forward cautiously and stopped at the place where the figure just stood. On the ground before him was a hole. It was deep and was large enough even for Hagrid, a second year who was “larger” than all the seventh years, to enter.

'It must be the entrance of the Chamber of Secrets,' Alex thought. 'So the creature escaped from this hole just now?'

No. Alex shook his head. The creature would not escape just because of a student. So why did the creature run away? It was supposed to be guarding the entrance instead of opening it widely, wasn't it?

Alex shivered again. The creature was still watching him. He could almost sense its piercing eyes staring directly at him, watching his every move. Not from the hole, but from the above.

Then everything made sense. Alex finally understood.

The legend was true. Salazar Slytherin kept a Chimaera in the forest and gave it a command, to kill anyone who attempted to enter the Chamber except for those Slytherin approved. Approved? That must be Slytherin's heir then. But it would be too complicated for the creature to identify. It must be something simpler for it to follow. What did Slytherin approve? Alex snorted inwardly. Of course, Pureblood. And of course that Slytherin's heir would be a pureblood too.

Alex stared into the hole in front of him. The Chimaera was here to kill, not to guard. It would not prevent anyone to enter the hole, but it would prevent anyone but pureblood who entered the hole from coming out alive.

Alex knew for sure Tom was in it, and was unable to escape.

What should he do? He didn't have much choice, did he? He was not going to leave without Tom. And in order to drag Tom out... well, hopefully they would be able to find a way out down there...

"Nox," Alex muttered. The wand light died down and darkness enclosed him immediately. Alex swallowed and jumped into the dark hole in front of him.

A/N: No Tom this time...But this chapter is important in the story. (Why? You'll find out later...)

Please Read & Reivew!

## Chapter 11: Into the Hole

Alex landed heavily on the ground. He was sure he would have broken several bones if he didn't use the floating spell the slow himself down.

"Lumos." Alex looked around. Ahead of him was a long tunnel. Well, at least he guessed it was long, since he couldn't really see what was ahead of him with the dim light of his wand.

'Tom is in there some where...' he thought.

He took a last look upward at the entrance and turned back to face the dark road ahead of him. Forcing himself not to think about the Chimaera that was waiting to kill its prey, he went forward cautiously.

Alex didn't know how long did he walk in the dark tunnel. He kept going, hoping at the same time that he wasn't too late to save his friend.

Save? Alex winced at that. What should he do even if he found Tom? Though he kept denying it, deep inside his heart he knew...

There was no way out.

A gasp brought Alex out of his grim thought immediately. He narrowed his eyes, trying to see whatever made the noise. He knew he was an easy target, the glowing wand told everyone in the tunnel he was right there for them to attack, so he decided to wait. But after what seemed like hours of silence, when it was obvious that neither side wanted to make the first move, Alex clenched his wand tighter and took a few steps forward.

"Stupefy!" A voice shouted as soon as Alex moved.

But Alex was prepared for this and dodged the spell easily. He also recognized the voice immediately.

"Tom!" Alex shouted into the darkness.

“Alex?” said shaking voice.

“Yes, it’s me.” Alex sighed in relief, at least Tom was still alive. He moved forward slowly, raising his arms to show he wouldn’t attack.

Then he saw Tom.

The boy was sitting beside a wall of the tunnel. He was pale and gritting his teeth, obviously in pain. His forehead was injured but the bleeding had already stopped. He pointed his wand directly at Alex with one hand and clenched his left leg with another. He slowly lowered his wand but stared at Alex in shock when the fifth year Slytherin kneeled down beside him.

“Your leg is broken,” Alex observed. “Do you have any other injuries except your leg and your forehead?” he asked, worried.

Tom didn’t reply. He only stared at Alex with wide eyes.

“Why are you here?” he asked weakly. “You could have died...”

Before he finished his sentence Alex exploded, yelling loudly despite the circumstance. “WHY AM I HERE? BECAUSE YOU COULD HAVE DIED! WHAT DO YOU THINK YOU ARE DOING, TOM MARVOLO RIDDLE?”

Tom avoided Alex’s eyes. “You should not be involved in this. It’s my own problem.”

“I thought we are friends,” Alex responded quietly, a hurt expression appeared on his face.

“We are!” Tom’s head snapped up, but as soon as he met Alex’s eyes he looked down again. “That’s why I don’t want you to come,” he said just barely loud enough for Alex to hear. Then hesitantly he added, “I don’t want pull my... only friend into danger.”

Alex moved closer to Tom. “But that’s what friends are for,” he said softly, “to pull each other into trouble and to help each other out of it.”

Tom looked up at Alex. In the other boy's eyes, he saw care and determination, a determination to help and protect his friend under any circumstance, a determination without any doubt.

Finally Tom sighed. He smiled at Alex faintly and said, "Fine. You win."

"As always." Alex grinned. "It seems finally I am able to knock some senses into your thick skull, you stupid snake."

Tom shot him a glare. "I'm not stupid, you stubborn git!"

Alex laughed, soon followed by Tom. As soon as the laughter died down, Alex became serious again. He looked at Tom's left leg and frowned.

"What happened?" he asked.

Tom pointed to the road ahead. "There's a locked door not far away from here. I tried many ways but I still couldn't open it. Then I heard a horrible roar. I felt the ground shaking and the rocks started to drop down. I knew something was wrong and I tried to get out of here. But that Chimaera guarded the entrance...It nearly got me, I guess. When I climbed up that entrance, it advanced on me. But before it reached me, I lost my hold and dropped down. That's why I broke my leg and have a few bruises... they're just minor injuries, don't worry." he hastily added when Alex's frown deepened. "I'm not sure when the Chimera would decide to jump in the hole, so I crawled back into the tunnel as deep as I could manage." he paused and looked at Alex. "There's no way out, you know?" he said quietly.

Alex sighed and nodded slowly. "I know. I think Slytherin commanded that Chimera to kill anyone who enter this tunnel. Anyone but pureblood I guess. That is, we'll certainly be killed unless we find a way out down here." he concluded grimly.

"You know?" said Tom, his eyes widened. "Why are you coming down here then? That's suicide!"

Alex shrugged. "I don't know why. I just... well, the only thing on my mind when I was standing before the entrance was that I wanted to save you. And if I wanted to drag you out of here at least I needed to jump down myself."

"You're mental!" Tom said in disbelief.

"Not the only one," Alex muttered.

If Tom heard him, he didn't react. Instead he smirked. "Now who is acting like a Gryffindor this time?" he raised his eyebrows at Alex.

Alex rolled his eyes. He pushed himself up from his kneeling position.

"Let's take another look at the door you said. That seems to be our only way out of here... no, don't you try to move, Tom." he stopped Tom immediately as the boy tried to get up. Alex closed his eyes and started searching his memories again. He remembered a spell was used in a similar circumstance. What that circumstance was he didn't know, but he remembered the spell.

"Ferula." He pointed his wand at Tom's leg., creating some bandages around Tom's wound. Then he helped Tom back to his feet.

Tom slowly moved his weight to his injured leg. "That's much better. Thanks," he said.

Alex smiled. "Let's go."

Tom nodded and the two of them set off again. Despite the odds, they were more hopeful then before now. After all, they knew they were no longer alone.

---

"Alohomora." The two Slytherins cast the spell together, but received no respond from the door in front of them.

Tom shook his head. "It's hopeless."

Alex sighed. He had to agree with Tom. They had tried to open the door by every possible ways they could think of, but none of them worked.

Alex looked at the door warily. The large metal door blocked the entrance to the deeper part of the tunnel. It was covered by a think layer of mud, obviously hadn't been opened for over a century. Some parts of the mud layer cast off when they attempted to push the door open just now, revealing... Alex narrowed his eyes. There seemed some sort of pattern on the door, behind the layer of mud.

Alex slowly went forward. He pointed his wand at the door.

“Scourgify,” he muttered the cleaning spell and gasped at what he saw on the cleaned door.

A drawing of a Basilisk.

Then he heard a voice coming from the other side of the door.

/Open the door./

He recognized this hissing sound. It was parseltongue.

Tom gasped behind him. “Who spoke?”

Alex turned abruptly to face Tom. “You understand what it said?” he asked.

Tom looked confused. “Of course. It said open the door... but why it emphasized the word open? Would it be...” he frowned. “But we've tried it before.”

Then his slowly went forward, facing the painting of the Basilisk.

/Open!/

Both Tom's and Alex's eyes widened in shock as they heard the hissing sound came out from Tom's mouth.

‘Tom was a parselmouth too? What does that suppose to mean?’ thought Alex. He looked at his friend, who was still staring at the door in shock as it slowly opened to reveal another dark passage.

“Tom.” Alex called his friend softly.

Tom raised his head slowly, uncertainty clearly shown in his face.

“What did I...” he choked out.

“You are a parselmouth.” Alex said with a shaking voice.

“But... it can’t be.” said Tom.

“Why? Is being a parselmouth a problem?” asked Alex. He remembered Nicolas’ reaction about his being a parselmouth; the older wizard was almost... scared.

“Why?” Tom stared at him in disbelief. Then he sighed. “Do you know why the symbol of Slytherin house is a serpent?”

“Er... because Salazar Slytherin is parselmouth?” said Alex. He remembered this from his search of the Chamber. And that was when he knew “parselmouth” meant someone who could talk to snakes.

Tom nodded. “And that’s what Slytherin was famous for. He and his descendant were the only ones who could talk to snakes.” he rubbed his forehead. “But I couldn’t be a descendant of Slytherin.”

A descendant of Slytherin? So that meant Alex himself was somehow related to Slytherin too? Alex shook his head. It was not the time to think about this. Maybe in the future being a parselmouth would not be considered special? Or maybe everyone could talk to snakes or all other creatures in the future?

But was Tom really a descendant of Slytherin? The heir of Slytherin? That was not impossible. Alex remembered the book they found in the library. If Tom was indeed the heir of Slytherin, then it would explain why only Tom was able to see the book. And Tom was here finding the Chamber of Secrets because someone was calling for him.

“It’s possible that you are the heir of Slytherin, you know?” Alex said quietly. Then he went on to tell him what he saw in the library.

Tom looked doubtful after hearing Alex’s explanation. “But...”

“There’s only one way to prove it.” said Alex, staring at the dark passage ahead of them.

Tom sighed. “Let’s go.”

---

After another long walk, they finally reached the end of the tunnel. Before them was a large room. There were some ancient runes on the stone wall ahead of them. And on their left was a door.

“Great. Another locked door.” groaned Alex.

“Those runes seem to be the key to open the door.” He turned to Alex. “You didn’t take Ancient Runes, right? I remember you said Divination seemed to be more... useful than Ancient Runes.”

“In normal situation, Ancient Runes really didn’t seem to be quite useful.” Alex protested. “And Divination is not that bad either.”

Tom went forward to examine the runes. “I’ll try to translate them then. I’ve read some books about...”

Tom stopped abruptly. The two boys jumped as they heard footsteps coming from the dark tunnel. They exchanged a look before moving to a corner of the room and removed the light from their wands together, so that the enemy couldn’t see them and they could make the first move.

The footsteps became louder and louder. Alex held his breath and blinked several times to adjust his eyes to the darkness. He felt Tom moved closer to him and heard the boy swallow as a dark figure entered the room.

---

A/N: Please REVIEW!

## Chapter 12: Beyond the Chamber

A dark figure entered the room; there was a dim light surrounding it. A dim light? Alex didn't think a Chimaera would glow, so it wasn't that creature then.

Suddenly the footstep stopped and he heard a shaking voice came from the entrance.

"Is... is anyone here?"

Alex jumped at the sound. Though the voice was missing its usual arrogance, he recognized it immediately.

"Lestrange?" he asked into the darkness.

He heard a gasp followed by a sigh of relief. "Salutor?"

"Lumos." Alex lighted his wand and heard Tom muttered the incantation beside him. With the light of three wands, they immediately spotted a paled Coilean Lestrange standing at the entrance.

Alex stared at the brown haired boy in shock. "What are you doing here?" he asked with the disbelieving tone Tom had used earlier when Alex came to his rescue.

Lestrange's gaze shifted from Alex to Tom, then back to Alex. If they were not in a situation like this, Alex would be amazed to see the arrogant Slytherin prefect was actually panicking.

"Where are we?" he asked with a shaking voice.

"You're here in the first place and yet you ask me where we are?" Alex narrowed his eyes in suspicion. Lestrange was scared and seemingly did not know anything about this place; there was only one possible explanation of why he was here.

Obviously, Tom had also come to the same conclusion. He stepped forward, eyes narrowed. "You followed us," he said in a dangerous soft voice.

Alex filched. That was a tone he seldom heard Tom used. Whenever Tom used this kind of tone in his speech, which usually directed at muggles, Alex would shiver involuntarily. It was because this side of Tom made Alex feel that his younger friend was actually... dangerous.

Lestrange unconsciously took a step backward. When it was clear that the Slytherin was not going to say anything, Tom continued in the same voice, "What do you want?"

As Lestrange paled even more, Alex placed his hand on Tom's shoulder, squeezing it softly to calm the boy down. He felt Tom slowly relax, but the boy's eyes never left the Slytherin Prefect.

Alex sighed. He knew why Tom behaved like that. Growing up in an orphanage gave Tom a distrustful character. The boy was always on his guard and rarely dropped his wall of defense. Somehow Alex doubted anyone had ever broken through Tom's wall and got to know the lonely boy behind it except him. And from his experience with Tom, he knew it was the truth.

"Why did you follow us, Lestrange? Why are you here?" still keeping his hand on Tom's shoulder, Alex asked in a cold voice.

Under two pairs of piercing glares, Lestrange swallowed and took a deep breath in attempt to calm himself. He looked at Alex and started his explanation. "I saw you enter the common room and rush out again after a few minutes. Then I noticed that Riddle was not in the common room too... I knew something was going on and followed you. I followed you into the Forbidden Forest and decided to turn back. But several wolves attacked me on my way. I lost my sense of direction while I tried to escape and I ran to a clearing in the forest with them still on my tail. I have no other choice so I jumped into this hole and found you here." Lestrange paused and looked away. Despite the boy's effort to conceal his emotion, Alex could tell that Lestrange was frightened and was more than glad to see them.

"Why did you follow me then? Somehow I doubt that was because of our well being." said Alex, locking his eyes with the brown haired boy.

"I'm a prefect." Lestrange answered simply, raising his head slightly at the same time.

Tom narrowed his eyes while Alex raised his eyebrows at the answer. Alex had a feeling that Tom would start throwing hexes to the arrogant Slytherin soon. Not that he really cared, but they had some other urgent matters in hand. Well, Lestrange didn't seem to know they were in mortal danger now and Tom needed something to help him calm down anyway...

"In case you really don't know what did you put yourself into, Lestrange, we are now standing in a tunnel with a locked door ahead and a Chimaera behind," said Alex calmly and slowly. He watched in amusement as the information started to sink in. The boy's eyes widened and turned his shaking body to look at back the direction he came from.

"You are..." he said with his trembling voice.

"Telling the truth," said Tom, answering his unfinished question.

Alex eyed Tom, the boy had obviously calmed down a little, and he even chuckled softly when Lestrange collapsed on the ground in shock.

"Now, tell us what do you want." said Alex. He did feel a little sorry for the boy, but he didn't let it shown on his face.

Lestrange sighed. "I know you two are planning something secretly. You've been working on something for months," he said. "I know it's about a secret of Salazar Slytherin. And..." he paused and looked at Tom.

"You don't want a half blood to know Slytherin's secret." Tom finished the sentence in a soft voice.

Lestrange held Tom's glance for a while then nodded. "But I don't think that mattered anymore..." he said.

Alex sighed and helped the boy to his feet. "Come on, let's work out the runes before the Chimaera comes," he said quietly.

---

The three Slytherins worked in an uncomfortable silence. Though the fact that Lestrange chose Ancient Runes over Divination as his elective did help a lot, their speed of translation was still very slow.

"It seems to be a riddle..." said Tom absentmindedly as they finished translating nearly half of the runes.

Alex snickered. "Oh, is it your aunt or your uncle, Tom?" he asked from beside the boy.

Tom snorted and pushed Alex away playfully while Lestrange watched the scene with amusement.

Suddenly a rock dropped down from the ceiling, narrowly missing Alex by only a few inches. Before any of them had time to react, the ground started shaking; more sands and rocks fell down from the top.

"What's going on?" asked Lestrange, shielding his head with his hands.

A roar from the direction of the entrance caught the boys' attention. The three of them turned as one. They could see a lion's head appeared from the entrance, followed by a goat's body and a dragon's tail. The ground shook with every movement the creature made.

Lestrange paled. "That is..."

"It seems the Chimaera can't wait until we attempt to get out and decide to kill its prey now." said Alex grimly. He unconsciously moved closer to Tom, prepared to protect his younger friend if necessary.

The Chimaera's piercing red eyes scanned through them. As its eyes met Lestrange's, the brown haired boy gasped and started running away from the glance.

"Lestrange! Get back here!" Alex yelled and started running after him.

Lestrange's attempt to escape was quite useless actually, since the Chimaera blocked the entrance and the action would only catch the creature's attention. The Chimaera followed Lestrange's movement as he ran halfway across the room before being stopped by Alex who grabbed his shoulder tightly.

"Stay calm. Don't let it know you are frightened." Alex hissed in his roommate's ear.

Lestrange glared at Alex briefly and shoved off his hand. Alex looked up at the Chimaera again. He swore under his breath as the creature started running towards them. The ground started shaking again; Alex tried his best to stay on his feet while training his wand on the Chimaera at the same time. The creature suddenly leaped at them but stopped just before it reached Lestrange. It stared at the boy who was now shaking violently and slowly backed off.

'Lestrange is a pureblood.' Alex thought. 'That's why the Chimaera didn't attack him. But we are still in danger... there's no way we can escape with it running around freely...'

Thinking quickly, Alex said, "The Stunning Spell. Together. On my count of three." He turned to Lestrange beside him; the boy swallowed and nodded, showing he understood the plan. Then he turned to the other side of the room where Tom stood. The boy was pointing his wand directly at the Chimaera and sensing Alex's glance, he inclined his head slightly.

The Chimaera had returned to its attacking posture and was focusing on Tom at the moment.

"One... two... three..."

"Stupefy!"

"Stupefy!"

"Stupefy!"

Three red curses flew at the Chimaera at the same time. Upon being hit by the curses, the Chimaera fell down, its eyes half closed and its body was still moving, struggling to get up.

"Let's go before it gets up." said Alex.

As Alex ran out of the room with Lestrange, he turned and started to see Tom was still in there.

"What are you doing there, Tom? Run!" he yelled.

Tom bit his lip. "I..."

He glanced at Alex, then at the locked door and the runes.

"Leave it there, Tom! Get out now!" Alex shouted desperately.

But it was too late. Tom gasped as the Chimaera stood up and jumped at him. The next moment he wand was knocked out of his hand and he was pinned on the floor. He closed his eyes, prepared for the coming attack.

"Tom!"

Alex rushed forward, shoving off Lestrange's grip on him. He did the only thing on his mind: he jumped onto the creature's back and stabbed its eye with his wand. The Chimaera roared and turned abruptly. Alex was thrown off to the ground. He rolled to his back and his eyes widened at the red eyes staring down at him. The Chimaera lunged at him and landed on his chest heavily. Alex drew his left arm in front of himself instinctively as the creature opened its mouth to reveal its shape teeth. Blood spilt everywhere as the shape teeth pierced deeply into Alex's forearm. Alex screamed in pain, he felt his arm was going to be torn off. But the Chimaera didn't cease its attack; it made another bite on Alex's shoulder as he turned in pain. All these

happened in a few seconds, but for Alex it felt like ages. He closed his eyes tightly; the pain was almost unbearable as the creature torn out the flesh from his shoulder.

Tom, still lying on the ground, watched in horror as the Chimaera left him to attack his friend. His paled as Alex screamed in pain and his blood scattered everywhere. Tom rolled to his right and grabbed his wand on the ground. With a sharp turn, he pointed his wand at the Chimaera. His eyes narrowed in fury and his yelled the most powerful curse he knew.

"Avada Kedavra!"

---

A/N: Finally, another chapter! Please Review!  
Review this Story/Chapter

## Chapter 13: The Prophecy of the Phoenix

Green light shot out from Tom's wand and hit the Chimaera directly.

Tom took in a sharp breath as he felt the power flowed from his body to his wand. He widened his eyes when the curse took effect and Chimaera fell to the ground in front of his eyes. He stared at his wand in disbelief then shook his head and focused on his friend.

Alex was in bad condition. He lay on the ground with his eyes closed. His left arm and shoulder were seriously injured. There were also several busies over his body. Tom rushed to his side and kneeled down beside him.

"Alex?" said Tom in a shaking voice. He started to panic when Alex gave no respond. He leaned closer and slowly he placed a hand on Alex's neck. He sighed in relief when he felt the weak pulse of his friend. Suddenly Alex moaned and coughed; blood spilt out from his mouth. Despite his sudden movement, he still remained unconscious.

Tom gritted his teeth. It was not good. Alex was severely injured and with the excessive blood loss... Tom knew clearly that although his friend was still alive, he couldn't last long.

Tom turned to look at the lifeless form lying beside his friend. The Chimaera was dead, killed by Tom's own hand. Tom didn't feel sorry for that creature, it deserved the death, but it was amazing that he could end a life so easily only by a single incantation.

"Is it... dead?" Tom turned to see Lestrange walked into the room cautiously, eyeing the Chimaera.

Tom nodded then turned his gaze back to Alex.

"Is he alright?" Lestrange asked quietly. The brown haired boy was paled and for the first time since Tom met the boy, Lestrange appeared to be concerned, concerned about his fellow Slytherin's welfare.

Tom turned back to the unconscious form of Alex. He lowered his head and closed his eyes.

"No... he's not," Tom answered softly. He paused for a while then looked up at Lestrange, who was now standing beside him. "We need bring Alex to the Hospital Wing as soon as we can," he said and stood up shakily.

Lestrange nodded. "We can carry him by a stretcher. I will find something to transfig..." He stopped as a large stone fell down just behind Tom, causing a loud crushing sound.

Tom jumped as the stone landed behind him. He looked up at the ceiling and swore. The Chimaera caused a minor earthquake just now and the ceiling of the whole tunnel was collapsing. Without warning, more rocks and stones fell down.

"We need to get out of here now, before the whole tunnel collapse," said Tom.

He lifted up Alex cautiously. He tried to move his friend as light as possible so as to reduce his pain while desperately trying to shield Alex from the falling stones. He hissed in pain when he got to his feet with Alex in his arm. Though Alex was way too light for his age, the increased pressure was too much for Tom's broken leg.

"Let me do it. You're injured too," said Lestrange. The older Slytherin approached and carefully lifted Alex from Tom's arms before Tom could protest. "Let's go." he nodded to the entrance and started walking towards to hastily.

Tom looked around the room until he spotted what he had been looking for near the dead body of the Chimaera. Covering his head with his hand, he ran back and grab Alex's wand before hastily left the room that led to the Chamber of Secrets.

---

After what seemed like ages of running in the dark tunnel, they finally escaped the dreadful tunnel. And for the first time their lives, they were glad to be back in the Forbidden Forest.

The two Slytherins panted heavily from their close escape. Had they run a little slower, they would have been buried alive when the whole structure collapsed.

Lestrange carefully lay Alex down on the ground. Alex was still unconscious. He was paled and his body was cold due to the large amount of blood loss during the escape.

Tom approached his friend's unconscious form slowly and kneeled beside him. There was no way Alex could make it back to the castle and Tom knew it.

"Damn it!" Tom slammed the ground with his fist. "What can I do...?"

Lestrange stood behind Tom. "Riddle..." He reached out a hand, preparing to comfort the boy, but then hesitated and drew back his outstretched arm. His arm fell back to his side and he clenched his fist. "What should we do? What should I do?" he muttered to himself.

He stared back Tom and it was just then he noticed a line of tears rolling down the boy's chin. The boy shut his eyes, sobbing silently.

"It's all my fault," Tom spoke hoarsely. "If... if I hadn't been so eager to find the Chamber..."

"Riddle..." Lestrange kneeled beside him. He looked uneasy, obviously didn't know what to say. "It is not your..."

"It is my fault." Tom shot his head up and stared at Lestrange. "If I had run away in time, Alex wouldn't have run back and fought that monster. I should be the one who is laying here, not him!"

Then Tom felt a warm sensation in his leg. He frowned and turned to find his right pocket glowing. He cautiously drew his and Alex's wand out of his pocket and stared at them with wide eyes. The two wands were glowing with bright white light and Tom could feel heat emerging

from the wands. As he separated the two wands, holding on in each hand, a golden strand formed and linked the two glowing wands together.

A gasp from Lestrange made him took his eyes off the wands. He turned to look at the other Slytherin, who was gasping at something on the sky. Tom followed Lestrange's gaze and found himself staring at a burning red flame hovering over the forest.

"The flame is coming towards us!" said Lestrange.

As the "flame" flew nearer, Tom was finally able to make out its outline. It was not a flame; it had the shape of a bird. A red bird burning with flame...

Then Tom knew what it was. "It's a phoenix," he said.

"It is beautiful," Lestrange commented as the bird flew near enough for them to see its feature clearly.

The phoenix flew over them in circle. Then Tom heard a music that he knew he would never forget in his life. The song of the phoenix was soft and peaceful. Upon hearing the song, Tom felt himself slowly calmed down and relaxed. After a while, a drop of water dropped onto his arm. He wrapped it away with his hand then realized it wasn't water at all. Tom looked up and saw the phoenix crying; its tears dripped down from its chin and fell like rain. As the phoenix's tears connected to Tom's injured leg, the broken bone started to mend and not more then a few seconds later the leg was as good as new.

Tom stared in shock as he saw the bruises on his arms slowly closed, leaving only faint scars on his skin. Then he remembered he once read that the phoenix's tears had healing power. And if those tears could heal, maybe it could...

"Alex!" Tom turned sharply as his friend began to stir.

---

Alex groaned; his whole body was burning in pain. Well, except his left arm maybe; he couldn't feel anything from that arm at all. Then he felt that the pain slowly faded away, along with the numbness of his arm.

Where was he? In the Slytherin dormitory? No. He didn't go back to the dorm, because... Tom! Tom went to search for the Chamber of Secrets alone. And a Chimaera came... yes, a Chimaera! A Chimaera was attacking Tom! He needed to protect him!

He snapped his eyes open only to shut it again immediately. He waited a few seconds and tried it again. He opened his eyes slowly and saw a blurred image in front of him. Blinking a few times, he finally focused on the image and found himself face to face with a worried Tom.

Tom grinned as he opened his eyes. "Alex!" he shouted.

"Tom..." said Alex. Then he finally remembered what happened and why did he ended up with all those injuries. He stared at Tom worriedly. "Are you alright, Tom? The Chimaera..."

"The Chimaera's gone," Tom interrupted. He looked over Alex's body. "How do you feel?"

"My whole body is in pain," said Alex. "But I'm feeling better now."

"Are you sure?" asked Tom, staring at him worriedly.

"Yes, I am fine." He pushed himself to a sitting position. Rubbing his sore left arm and shoulder, he asked, "What happened? I thought I would surely dead... and what's that in your hand?"

"My hand? Oh..." Tom brought up the two wands he was holding, which was totally forgotten by him. "The wands started glowing when the phoenix appeared."

"Phoenix?" said Alex, puzzled.

Tom raised his eyebrows and nodded to the sky. Alex looked up and stared in awe at the phoenix circling in the sky.

"It's the phoenix's tears that heal you," said Tom.

Alex looked from the phoenix to his arm. His left forearm was now covered with nasty scars that he assumed was identical to the Chimaera's dentations. He looked back at Tom and asked, "What happened after the Chimaera attacked me? Did you find the Chamber of Secrets?"

Tom lowered his head and shifted uneasily. "I'll tell you what happened later. Here," said Tom, handing Alex back his wand, "your wand."

Alex reached out and grabbed back his wand. The glowing wand was warm and a golden strand connected his wand with the one in Tom's hand.

Just as Alex got back his wand, the phoenix flew down just on top of Tom and Alex. The next moment, a golden strand web was formed around them. The sound of the phoenix song was louder than ever when the two were encircled by the golden web. Their wands were glowing brightly and they both felt a warm sensation coming from other side of the link to their whole body.

Alex slowly closed his eyes at the peaceful song and let the warm feeling filled his body. That was a nice feeling. The two of them connected as one; he could almost hear Tom's heartbeat through the link...

The room was dark. There was a large veil in the middle. Before it were two dark figures, each with their wand out, pointed at their opponent. Their wands were glowing brightly and a phoenix was flying on top of them.

One of the dark figures raised his wand. Green light shot out from his wand and hit the other figure directly in his chest. The figure was thrown backwards and collapsed on the ground.

Alex gasped and opened his eyes. His heart was beating furiously despite the effect of the phoenix song. What was that? A vision? Or was it only his mind playing trick with him? Who were the two duelers? Alex remembered one of the figures was hit by the curse... and fell.

Alex shook his head to clear his mind. Then he realized the sound of the phoenix song had ceased. Looking down at his hand, he saw that the bright light of his wand began to fade. Soon, the web surrounding them disappeared followed by the light glowing from their wands. The phoenix shot up to the sky and disappeared with a flash of fire.

"What happened just now? The two of you were surrounded by a golden wall," said Lestrange.

Alex and Tom looked at each other. The two of them were sort of... connected just now.

"That was... amazing," Tom commented.

Alex nodded. Other than that "vision", what happened just now was strange but... as Tom put it, amazing.

"Where did the phoenix go?" he asked.

Tom shrugged. "Maybe you should ask why did the phoenix come." He grinned.

Lestrange looked into the forest. "We'd better go, before the professors find out." He looked at Alex. "Are you sure you are alright?"

Alex nodded. "I'm fine," he said. "Let's go."

---

A/N: Thanks for the reviews! Hopefully, I'd be able to post the next chapter this weekend (I really want to finish this before August). If not, the chapter will come (at least) two or three weeks later as I'm going on a vacation.

## Chapter 14: Promises

After the sudden appearance of the mysterious phoenix, Alex, Tom and Lestrange successfully sneaked back to the dungeons before anyone noticed their absence. Well, the Slytherins did notice of course, but none of them would betray their fellow Slytherins to the professors. The three of them were relieved by this; they knew clearly that if anyone discovered their “adventure”, they would surely be expelled instantly. No professors seemed to be aware of what happened in the Forbidden Forest that night, though Dumbledore was clearly suspecting something; the old man kept staring at them with his infamous all- knowing gaze. But a new “possession” of Dumbledore attracted Alex’s attention immensely. The day right after that night, the said professor happily presented his new “pet” to the whole school at breakfast. The three Slytherins recognized the bird resting on the old man’s shoulder immediately. That was the phoenix which saved them, Fawkes, as Dumbledore named it. Dumbledore said the phoenix flew into his quarter the night before and he decided to keep it.

Alex was eager to learn more about the mysterious creature and he guessed so was Tom. But Alex knew Tom would rather face the Chimaera again than having a private discussion with Dumbledore, not to mention that Tom was currently ignoring him, so he went to find the professor alone.

“It is beautiful, sir,” said Alex one day when he found Dumbledore pacing around the lake, with Fawkes on his shoulder.

“I see you and Mr. Riddle seem to be very interested in Fawkes,” said Dumbledore, eyeing Alex with that annoying glance again. “Interesting creature isn’t it?” the old man continued, stoking Fawkes’ feather. “Burst into flame when it is time for them to die and are reborn from the ashes.”

“It will be reborn?” said Alex, momentarily forgetting all the formality. “Does that mean it will never die?”

“It will, eventually,” the professor said, “when it has fulfilled its purpose.”

The answer only made Alex more confused. “Purpose?” he asked.

Dumbledore just smiled and continue stoking the phoenix’s feather. Alex looked up from his sitting position in the common room. I had been a week after their “adventure” and it had been a week that Tom started to avoid him. He thought of the conversation he had had with Tom right after they escaped from the Forbidden Forest that night. Tom told him everything happened after he fell unconscious and he was not at all approved of the boy’s use of the unforgivable curse. He still remembered the debate he had with Tom...

“You used what?” Alex exclaimed. Luckily they were now in the Room of Requirement, so no one could hear their little “conversation”.

“That is the only thing I can think of to get that Chimaera off you,” Tom said, looking uneasy. “I... I didn’t mean to kill it, I just want it to stop, I’m afraid...” he trailed off, lowering his gaze.

“But that’s Dark Magic!” said Alex.

“But that’s just a name. Dark or Light is just a label, both of them are magic, and I don’t see why they should classify them apart... ” Tom muttered and pursed. Then he bit his lip and in a low voice he said, “I am sorry.” before walking out of the room and leaving Alex alone.

Alex sighed. Tom had been avoiding him since then. He knew Tom did that to save him. So did it really matter that the spell was Dark Magic? And an unforgivable one at that case, even it’s not illegal to use the killing curse on a creature. It was at that time Alex started to ponder on what Tom had said. Is dark magic really as bad as other people thought? He had learned from Defense Against the Dark Arts that a spell was classified Dark when the spell involved emotional control. That was, took the killing curse as example, the person who wanted to cast it must really mean to kill for the curse to work correctly. And because of the aid of the caster’s will, dark magic was normally much more powerful than other normal spells. But the draw back was that this powerfulness was highly addictive and might easily

corrupt the mind of the ambitious ones, making them sink deeper and deeper into the sea of darkness. Since most dark arts were served for purposes like killing or torturing, most people regarded the use of dark magic as “evilness”. But how could you say that was evil if the spell was used to save someone? The more he thought about it, the more he realized what Tom meant. It was the intention that made one evil, not the form of magic the person used. As long as the person could control their own mind, he didn’t see any problem of using dark magic for good use.

Alex knew he should apologize to Tom for yelling at him like that and thanked the boy properly for saving him. But first, he needed to find him.

Alex groaned in frustration. Now he knew how hard it was to find Tom Riddle when he didn’t want to be found, especially in a castle like Hogwarts. If only he got something to locate his direction... then he thought of something. He did have something like that, didn’t he?

Alex closed his eyes and relaxed. He thought of Tom and focused on the link between them. He felt the wall that was built by his Occlumency to block the link. He slowly let the wall drop until it became nearly non-existent. With more focus he finally was able to reach Tom’s side of the link. Though Tom would not have noticed, they were now connected.

Alex walked around the castle unconsciously, letting his “mind” to direct him to the location of Tom. Finally he found himself in a room which the entrance was hidden behind a shelf in an abandoned storeroom of the dungeons. He began to think maybe finding that “hidden” mark of Slytherin was not a difficult task for Tom at all. That boy was unbelievable, finding a room in place like that.

“Here... you are,” said Alex, panting heavily. He was exhausted and he thought he could fall asleep at any moment now. He had mastered Occlumency a long time ago, so closing a link was like nothing to him and he could do it constantly without even realizing he was doing it. But opening a link and trying to “connect” to the other side was new to him, and that was consuming.

The room was a mini conference room. In the middle of the room was a long table, with four or five chairs on each side. Sitting on the only occupied chair was Tom, who was, of course, reading. He jumped as he heard Alex's voice and jerked up his head to look at Alex in wide eyes.

"What a hiding place you choose, Tom," said Alex, dropping himself on a chair beside his friend. He waited until Tom got over his initial shock and started speaking before Tom could say anything. "I am sorry," he said quietly. "I shouldn't yell at you, after all you've done for me."

Tom frowned. "You don't need to say that for me. I know you hate the dark arts."

Alex shook his head. "No," he said. "I didn't say that because of you. You're right, dark magic or not, it's still magic and can be put into good use too. It's the intention that makes it evil, not the spell." When Tom didn't respond, he shifted nervously in his chair. "I am sorry. Forgive me?" he asked softly.

Tom sighed. "You've nothing to apologize for," he said quietly.

Alex frowned. 'What happened?' he thought. He looked into Tom's eyes and said again, "I don't know what happened and why you've been avoiding me, but no matter what, I want thank you, Tom, for saving my life."

Tom looked away from Alex's gaze. "You shouldn't thank me," he said quietly after a long silent, looking more and more uneasy. "I should be the one." He paused for a while and sighed. Looking back at Alex, he said, "I am sorry. It's because of me that you got into that situation." He looked down and continued in a more quiet voice, "I... I guess it would be better if I was left alone."

"Oh, stop that!" suppressing his urge to roll his eyes, Alex said before Tom could continue. "So that's why you kept avoiding me."

"You nearly died! And it's all my fault!" Tom yelled.

“I do believe it is my decision that I jumped on that Chimaera,” said Alex, “so it is not your fault. Besides, as I said, you saved my life.”

“You didn’t need to be saved in the first place if it’s not for me!” yelled Tom. He closed his eyes as if thinking of some painful memory.

“I chose to do that, and I will do the same if I have a chance do it again.”

“Typical Gryffindor,” Tom said weakly.

Alex smirked. “I think you are more of a Gryffindor than me, Tom.”

Tom sighed. “It will do you no good to be so close to me, Alex,” he said softly.

Alex rolled his eyes. “Would you stop that for a minute please?”

Tom shook his head. “You don’t understand,” he said. After a long pause he continued. “It’s always the same. People got hurt because they are close to me. I... I had several friends in the orphanage, until one of them was seriously injured when I first showed my magical talent. They have never talked to me since then, same with the other orphans. I saw it in their eyes, they were afraid of me. The only one who was still willing to come near me was a girl. We were... sort of friends I guess. But one day we argued and...” Tom gritted his teeth. “I didn’t mean to hurt her, but I just couldn’t control my magic. No one came near me since then. They all looked at me as if I was... a dangerous animal or something... I...”

“That’s enough, Tom,” Alex interrupted, raising his hand to stop Tom from continuing. “Stop saying all these nonsense. It is my choice that I befriended you, my choice that I helped you to find the Chamber of Secrets and my choice that I jumped on the Chimaera to help you, I never regret my decision, so stop pushing me away,” he said firmly. “I won’t be here in the first place if I blame you for what happened. Honestly, did you really think I would not talk to you because of that, or because I am afraid to get hurt again? You really think I would leave you alone just like those orphans did?”

Tom shifted uneasily in his chair.

“You did?” Alex asked unbelievingly.

“It always ends up like that...” Tom looked up at Alex and rubbed his forehead. “You made me feel really stupid.”

“That you are,” said Alex mockingly.

“I should have known I couldn’t get rid of you that easily,” said Tom, sighing dramatically. “After all, you are a stubborn Gryffindor and I don’t think something as little as mortal danger could stop you. But at least let me say this.” He stood up and placed his right hand before his heart. “Thank you for saving my life, Alex. I own you a life debt,” he said solemnly, looking into Alex’s eyes. “I will find a way to repay you, to help you whenever you need my help.”

Alex frowned. “You don’t need to take it so seriously, Tom...”

But obviously, his friend was as stubborn as he was.

Alex was growing more and more nervous when the end of the school year drew by; he didn’t want to leave Tom, not after what he had learned about Tom’s past. But if he forced to stay, he might be stuck in this time period and he could not regain his lost memory forever. Besides, he did not belong here. He sighed. He needed to find a way to tell Tom he was going to leave.

“Tom, I need to talk to you,” Alex said to Tom the day before the end of school year.

Tom was playing chess with Lestrange, a game Alex lost every time when he played with Tom.

Lestrange finally accepted Tom as a worthy member of the Serpent House after he saw Tom’s powerful killing curse. He also learned what happened to Tom and Alex before he came into the scene. The boy was shocked to hear that Tom was a parseltongue and was sticking around Tom since then. Rumors of Tom being the Heir of Slytherin were soon spread all over the house, thought they never

came further than the Slytherin common room, the Slytherins made sure it was kept secret from the rest of the school.

Tom looked up at Alex's voice. "What..." he started, but stopped as he saw the seriousness in Alex's eyes.

"I need to talk to you... in private," Alex said quietly.

Tom frowned but nodded. He excused himself from the chess game and followed Alex out of the common room to their secret base- the Room of Requirement.

"I... I am not coming back in the next school year," said Alex uneasily after they settled down under their accustomed tree in the room.

"What?" shouted Tom. "But you still haven't restored your memory!"

Alex looked down at the ground and bit his lip. He didn't want to lie to Tom, especially after all the painful truth Tom had revealed to him concerning the boy's past.

"I... I didn't lose my memory due to an accident as the headmaster said," he said. "I am sorry, Tom. But... as much as I want to, I... I just can't stay here, I don't belong here."

Tom frowned. "What do you mean?"

Alex sighed. 'I am sorry, Nicolas,' he thought, 'but I can't lie to him.' Then he went on and told Tom everything, about the time travel, the memory loss, baring only the part about parseltongue, his scar and the connection between them.

Tom listened to his story with wide eyes. "Time traveling?" he said disbelievingly.

Alex nodded. "I am telling the truth," he said. Then quietly he added, "I am sorry. But I can't stay, I don't belong here, my staying will only interfere with the timeline..."

“I understand,” Tom said quietly after a long silence. He looked at Alex. “Why didn’t you tell me earlier?” he asked.

“I am sorry,” Alex said again.

Tom lay down and stared at the leafy top of the tree wordlessly.

“Tom...” Alex drew closer and placed his hand on his friend’s shoulder. “I...”

Tom shook his head. “You have nothing to apologize for, as I have said before.” He shifted his gaze from the tree top to Alex. “You are not even supposed to tell anyone about this, right?”

Alex sighed and nodded.

“I am glad you told me, really, and I don’t blame you for not telling me before,” he said. “It’s just...” He looked away from Alex and said softly, “I will be alone again.”

“You will not be alone,” said Alex. “The other Slytherins are willing to befriend you now. And I saw you were getting along with Lestrange quite well.”

Tom laughed dryly. “Friends?” he said. “They stick around me only because I am a parseltongue, supposedly the Heir of Slytherin. They will never be my friends.”

“But you still will not be alone,” said Alex. “Remember what you said before? You will not get rid of me so easily.”

Tom looked at him questionably.

Alex smiled sadly. “I must go back, as much as I want to stay, but it doesn’t mean we will not see each other again in the future. I just have to find you when I get back.”

Tom mused on Alex’s word then said, “But you don’t even know when you came from,” he said. “What if you came from hundreds of years

from the future? What if I've already... died at the time you came from?"

"Then I'll find a way," said Alex firmly. "Another time travel or whatever, I will find a way to get to you."

Tom eyed Alex for a moment then sat upright and said, "Promise?"

Alex nodded.

"Promise."

/But, master.../

/He is a speaker of your kind too, you will like him. /

/Are you sure, master? /

/He needs your company. Besides, I don't know how my 'home' is, so it will not be wise you bring you with me. You belong to this time, and you'd do better to stay here.../

/If that is what you want, master. /

/It is. I will miss you, I'm sure. But I am worried about him; he needs someone to talk to. /

/I will miss you too, master. Will I meet you again? /

/You will. Oh, remember not to tell him I can speck to you too. /

/All right. /

/Take care of him. /

"Where did you go last night?" asked Alex as the two of them settled down in the last compartment of the Hogwarts Express. Tom had disappeared after the end-of-year feast, saying he had something to do.

Tom grinned. "Hogsmeade," he said simply.

Alex raised his eyebrow. “Sneaking around again?” he teased. “What for?”

Tom searched his robe pocket and grabbed out a small box. “For this,” he said, handing the box to Alex.

Alex opened the box to find a necklace in it. “This is...”

“A gift for you,” said Tom.

Alex took out the necklace and observed it carefully. It was very... Slytherin. At the end of the silver chain was a silver ring. When examined closely, Alex found that several ancient runes were carved on it. Right below the small ring was a deep green crystal in the shape of a water droplet. Alex could feel power emerging from the crystal as he clenched his hand around it.

“The shopkeeper told me that it is a protection amulet. It is used to protect the one who wear it. He said the crystal itself doesn’t have any magical power; all the protecting power of the amulet is from the one who gives it to you, that’s me, in this case. I don’t know how it works, all I know is it based on how much the person who gives this to you wants you to be safe at the moment you received it.”

Alex felt the strong power emerging from the crystal and smiled. “It’s strong,”

Tom grinned. “As long as I am still alive, it will protect you. Well, if it really works, that is.”

“It’s a wonderful gift, Tom,” said Alex softly. “Thank you.”

“This is the best I can think of... the best that I can find in Hogsmeade anyway. I am glad you like it,” he said, reddening slightly.

“Well, it’s my turn then,” said Alex, pulling out a box from under his chair, which he shoved in when Tom was unaware. The box quite large with several holes drilled on it and it was... moving.

Alex handed Tom the box. "This is my gift for you."

Tom jumped as he felt something moved in the box. "What's that?" he asked, eyeing the box with caution.

"Open it, she wouldn't bite... much," said Alex, amused.

"She?" Tom continued to stare at the box with uncertainty for a long time before lifting the lid cautiously and peered inside.

"You gave me a snake!" said Tom, amazed.

Alex smiled. "I guess you'd like to have someone to talk to."

Tom grinned happily. "Thank you, Alex, its great!" He looked back at the snake in the box and started hissing softly.

/Hello. /

/So you are my master, /the snake answered.

/Just Tom is alright. /

Tom looked up at Alex. "Does she have a name?"

Alex nodded. "Nagini."

The rest of the train ride was uneventful. Tom continued to talk to Nagini for some time while Alex pretended he did not understand a word they said. He had already told Tom about time traveling, he did not want to break another promise he made to Nicolas.

They also spent lots of time to talk; talk about the moments they shared, talked about the past, and the future. Tom was not at all looking forward to going back to the orphanage.

"But at least I have a company this time," he said, looking fondly at the snake which curled herself around his forearm.

They also played several rounds of chess. Tom won all the time, as always, much to Alex's annoyance.

Alex stared at the magical barrier in front of him then turned to face his friend, who was standing beside him, staring down at the floor.

Alex placed a hand on Tom's shoulder. "Don't worry, we'll meet again," he said firmly.

Tom looked up to face his friend. His face filled with reluctance. The two of them stared at each other for a while before embraced each other brotherly.

"I'll miss you," said Tom softly.

"So will I," said Alex. "I will find you. No matter what, I will find a way to get to you, I promise."

They stayed that way for a long time. When they finally broke away, Tom smiled sadly and extended his hand to Alex.

"See you in the future." he said.

Alex nodded, taking Tom's hand.

"See you in the future."

"Before you leave, I have something to give you," said Nicolas.

Alex eyes the thing in Nicolas' hand with suspicion. It was, of course, a stone. "Um... what is it?"

"It's a portkey."

Alex took a step back from the stone and eyed the older wizard uncertainly.

Nicolas smiled at Alex's reaction. "Don't worry, child. It will only activate if you ask it to. After you go back to your own time, you can use this stone wherever you want to come here, my home, for a visit, if I am still alive at the time you came from. Just place you fingers on it, say the activation spell 'vado' and it will bring you here like a portkey does. Say the same spell and it will bring you back to where

you have been before you come to my house. For safety reason, only you can activate it, but make sure no one was touching you when you use it, alright?.”

Alex nodded.

Nicolas handed Alex the stone. It stone was deep red in colour and had a smooth surface. “Come visit the old man when you have time, will you?”

Alex smiled. “I will.”

“So...” Nicolas grabbed the blue stone which brought Alex back in time a year ago from his cabinet and bring it before Alex. “Here we go. As I said before, no time will pass for you during your stay here, so you will find yourself in exactly the same time as you leave when you get back.”

Alex hesitated.

“Go on,” Nicolas encouraged him softly.

Alex gave Nicolas a brief hug. “Goodbye, Nicolas,” he said.

“See you soon, child,” said Nicolas warmly.

Alex turned back at the stone and swallowed. He looked around the house of Nicolas which he grew familiar with for the last time. He knew he would never forget the year his spent here, no matter what the future was. He lean forward and took a deep breath before touching the stone and disappear in a bright blue flash.

Time continued to run. People changed as time went by; old promises were broken and precious memories were buried deep down in people’s heart...

The two path walkers continued their journey, until their paths crossed again; until the two best friends met each other again...

End of part I

A/N: Finally the last chapter! The last chapter of "Learn from the History" anyway, the story is still far from the end. Now it's time to go back to the future and see what's going to happen between Harry and Voldie.

The Sequel "Friend or Foe" is already posted, you may check it from my profile!

But before moving on to read the sequel, PLEASE leave a comment on what you think of this story, about the plot, my writing or whatever you want to talk about. Thanks! .